

HEBREWS 11:30-40

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Hebrews chapter 11 as we continue our study through the Word of God. And tonight, we will finish up this chapter on the men and women of faith.

We have spent several weeks looking at these men and women of faith and what faith is all about because it is so important for us to understand. You see, as Christians we are to walk by faith and thus, faith must have legs to walk, you must go forward, you must obey what the Lord is telling you no matter how difficult it may be, trusting in His promise to you!

Then, as we get to Hebrews chapter 12 Paul is going to tell us, and I will paraphrase what he says, *“Now that you know what faith is all about, now that you have seen these examples of faith, that we are to run with endurance this race that is before us and understand that Jesus is the One who will see you through all of this because He is not just the Author of your faith, but He is the Finisher of your faith as well. He will see us through, we must go forward!”*

Keep in mind that in this letter to the Hebrews, Paul is writing to Jewish believers who were struggling with their faith, being drawn back into Judaism and so he wants to share with them some examples of faith that were lived out in the lives of the Old Testament saints, people and stories that they knew very well.

As Paul closed chapter 10 he said, and this is from The Amplified Bible, **“But our way is not that of those who draw back to eternal misery (perdition) and are utterly destroyed, but we are of those who believe [who cleave to and trust in and rely on God through Jesus Christ, the Messiah] and by faith preserve the soul.”**

In other words, he is saying that we are not being drawn back into the old ways, into Judaism as some, but we are pressing on into the presence of God, not those destructive practices.

And then he opens up Hebrews chapter 11 like this, **“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”** Hebrews 11:1-3.

One author defines faith this way, *“Faith is confidence in the trustworthiness of God. It is the conviction that what God says is true and that what He promises will come to pass.”*

So faith supports those things we know to be true, the promises of God even though we might not see them with our physical eyes, but through the eyes of faith we believe.

And that belief is the evidence or the confidence we need to live what we believe.

You see, faith truly begins when all other possibilities end, it is out of our hands and in the hands of God. And we act upon those promises, we walk by faith!

Now I don't know if you have noticed this or not, but have you seen any of the failures of these men and women spoken of in this chapter?

No, you have not, you only see their faith. In fact, the men and women we will be looking at tonight were not perfect, but here in this section on the Hall of Faith, their failures are not looked upon!

One writer put it like this,

If you and I had been writing this chapter, the next section would be *Faith Wandering* – but there is no mention of Israel's failure and forty years of wasted time.

Why?

Because that was an experience of *unbelief*, not faith!

The writer did use this experience in Hebrews 3 and 4 as an illustration of doubting the Word. But nowhere in Hebrews 11 will you find a record of *any* failure because of unbelief. Faith records only the victories.

- Warren W. Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p. 837

We tend to record and remember all our failures, and God doesn't. He looks at our faith and I hope that encourages you this evening.

With that said, let's begin reading in Hebrews chapter 11 and tonight we will pick up in verse 30 as we see what the Lord has for us regarding the faith of these Old Testament saints.

I think you will find this interesting, challenging and it may even cause you to think of faith a little differently as we finish up this chapter.

HEBREWS 11

VERSE 30

I am sure you are all familiar with the story of Joshua and the walls of Jericho falling down.

Moses has died and now Joshua is leading the children of Israel into the Promise Land and the first enemy they are going to face in the land of Canaan are the Amorites who lived in Jericho, a wicked and cruel people.

They sacrificed their children by placing them in jars and walled them in the walls of their home! Sexual immorality. All kinds of evil.

Now this city of Jericho was a double walled city with the outer wall being 6 feet thick and the inner wall some 12 feet thick.

The walls were some 30 feet high and linked together by houses that were built upon them.

This is where Rahab's house was located, and we will deal with her more when we get to Hebrews 11:31, as she was a woman of faith, even though she was not a Jew!

Now it was not as strong of a city as Babylon would be down the road but to these ex-slaves who wandered in circles in the wilderness for some 40 years, it didn't matter.

There is no way they could knock down the walls and defeat this enemy, from a human perspective at least. The Amorites had well-trained soldiers and their weapons of war were strong. Thus, there is no human way possible for these ex-slaves to defeat this military power.

And here is the promise that God gave to the Joshua and the children of Israel, "**You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him.**" Joshua 6:3-5.

Can you see Joshua explaining this to his men!

Place the soldiers in front, then the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant, and then the rear guard.

I guess you can say that this is not too bad, not yet!

But then Joshua tells them that they are to march around the city walls of Jericho once for six days, not saying a word and then return to camp.

Then, on the seventh day they were to go around the city walls of Jericho seven times, then the priests were to blow their trumpets, the people were to shout, and the walls will fall down!

Can you hear these soldiers, ***“Medic, do we have a medic in the house? This guy has lost his mind!”***

But that is not what happened, and this is an amazing step of faith on their part. Think about it. These are the people who waxed and waned in faith over those forty years in the wilderness and now, they believed by faith that God would give them the victory.

There was not even a question as to how it would all happen, just stepping out in faith.

Now the Amorites heard about these children of Israel and the victories that God had given them on the other side of the Jordan River, and now their city, Jericho was in trouble, so they put the city in a lockdown, the gates were closed. I think they started out being afraid, knowing the victories that the children of Israel already had against strong nations, but that will change as they see what the children of Israel are doing, their battle strategy you might say!

And I am sure as they saw this massive group of people approaching the walls of the city, they were not sure what they were in for. I’m sure the soldiers were preparing themselves for battle as they placed themselves on the wall of the city!

But then, nothing, all they saw that first day is these people walk around the city and then return home. Not a word was spoken.

Then day two came and the soldiers may have been a little more confident and maybe they shouted down from the walls of the city at the children of Israel, “*Your mother wears army boots!*” or whatever, you know, trash talking!

And as they went around the walls of the city the Jewish people said nothing and returned to camp.

Day three, four, five, six go by and the same thing happens.

The Jews must have been a laughingstock at this point.

Maybe each day the people gathered on the walls of the city with the soldiers to mock them, maybe even throwing things down upon them. Not much of a threat to them, at least that is what they thought.

But then, on the seventh day they went around the city seven times, the priests blew the trumpets and the people shouted and the walls of Jericho came tumbling down.

What is interesting is that archeological evidence supports this. You see, the walls of the city did not fall in, as you would expect if the enemy pushed them in, but they fell outwardly because God brought the walls down! God had given to the children of Israel a great victory.

In Joshua 6:20-21 we are told, “**So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.**”

Now let me clarify this because there are those who believe it is faith that brings these walls down or whatever the situation may be. No, faith by itself didn't bring down the walls of Jericho because there is no power in faith to do anything because faith isn't a power, it's a pathway.

What do I mean by that?

Make no mistake about it, the power is in God to do miracles but our faith in God and in what He has promised becomes the pathway or conduit that allows the power of God to flow from Him into our lives to do His work.

But also keep in mind that even faith in God is powerless to do His work if it isn't coupled with obedience. Remember what we read here in Hebrews 11:30, "**By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.**"

Keep in mind that they only had the promise of God that they would obtain this victory by doing these things. And now, as they walked by faith, trusting in the promise of God to them, we see that promise fulfilled and they gained this victory against the people of Jericho!

What about you? What has God called you to do?

Maybe He has spoken to your heart about something and He wants you to just pray and walk by faith as He told the children of Israel to do here and when He is about to bring about victory for you, then He may want you to shout and tell others.

For me, when God told me He was going to bring me up to Wisconsin one day to be a senior pastor, the only people who knew were my wife and my pastor, Phil.

It was between the Lord and me and once God did bring it to pass, I have shouted for joy at what God has done, the victory He has given to me. I have shared my story, a God story!

You see, what may seem foolish to the world is not to God. In fact, faith always looks foolish in the eyes of the world, but it causes us to trust in God and to then walk accordingly!

You see, “**. . . the foolishness of God is wiser than men. . .**” I Corinthians 1:25.

Arthur W. Pink tells us, “*Two things are required of us: adhering strictly to the directions which God has given us, trustfully and hopefully waiting for His blessings upon the same. Patience must have her perfect work. Thus it was with Israel here. They fainted not because the walls of Jericho fell not the first or second nor even the fifth or sixth day; nor did they take matters into their own hands and resort to another method.*”

May we have that kind of faith to do the impossible because God has called us to walk by faith and see what He is going to do.

VERSE 31

This is an amazing verse because it truly shows that we are saved by grace. The salvation of Rahab is an amazing story of God’s grace in action and make no mistake about it, we see His amazing grace today as He calls all people to saving faith, but then it is up to them to receive it or not!

I don’t know about you, but when you think of people of faith, Rahab is not on the top of the list, in fact, she is not on the list at all!

And yet God saw the faithfulness of this woman who was a Gentile and a prostitute!

Not only that, but being an Amorite, she was doomed for destruction because of their wickedness.

God spoke of this back in Genesis 15:16, and yet God spared Rahab and her family.

How come? How can that be?

Because, like I have said, God is gracious and for all who receive Him His arms are opened wide!

There is no difference today, we don't deserve it, but we can receive it by faith in Jesus!

Now how did Rahab find out about the God of Israel?

Being a prostitute and living on the wall of the city, she had frequent guests that came to see her. Many travelers, as they entered the city, needed a place to sleep and most of the people in the city did not trust them and thus, they stayed at these houses.

It was not only for prostitution but also for travelers to use like a hotel you might say.

Thus, as these visitors came and went, they would share the stories of how God gave the children of Israel victory over their enemies on the other side of the Jordan River.

And as she heard these stories she believed in the God of the Jews, even though she knew very little of Him!

Now, as Joshua was preparing to take Jericho, he sent out two spies into the city to check it out, but they didn't get too far before their cover was blown. They were at the house of Rahab to sleep and once their cover is blown, Rahab hides them and lies to the soldiers who came to look for these two men who were of the children of Israel.

And listen to what transpired in Joshua 2:8-13, **“Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, and said to the men: ‘I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father’s house, and give me a true token, and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.’”**

So she knows the God of the Jews, she understands that God is going to give them this victory, and all she asks is to be spared, her and her family from this invasion.

And the spies agree with one stipulation, one condition and that is she must place a scarlet cord in the window of her house and when the soldiers come into the city, all that are within her house will be spared by the Jewish soldiers.

If she didn’t do this, then they would die like the others.

And by faith, Rahab obeys and her and her family are spared!

Not only that, not only is she mentioned in this section dealing with faith, this section called *The Hall of Faith*, but she became the mother of Boaz, who married Ruth.

Thus, she was the great, great grandmother of David!

Which makes her an ancestor of Jesus according to Matthew 1:5, as Matthew starts out by saying, “**The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.**” Matthew 1:1.

We are told in Matthew 1:5-6, “**Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king.**”

God honored the simple faith of this woman and He still honors simple faith today!

Amazing Grace!

VERSE 32

Paul can spend a lot more time speaking of the men and women of faith in the Scriptures, but, as he says, “**And what more shall I say?**” He will give us a few more examples but the idea here is that now that you know these things, you need to walk by faith as they walked by faith, trusting in the promises of God!

Here in Hebrews 11:32 Paul lists six men as he speaks about their faith. It was not because of their titles or positions or notoriety, but their faith.

You see, God is not interested in the titles or positions or notoriety we may have, but He is interested in the faith we have because our faith causes us to walk accordingly.

Now, interestingly enough, four of these six men were Judges in Israel and if you remember the period of Judges, it was not pretty.

In fact, the book of Judges chronicles one of the blackest periods in Israel’s history and is summed up with the phrase “**In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**” Judges 17:6.

And we can clearly see that the nation of Israel fell into this cyclical pattern of *SIN*, as they turned from God.

Then they fell into *SERVITUDE*, where God brought them into bondage because of their sin, their enemies took them captive.

From servitude they moved into *SUPPLICATION* where they repented before God for their sins.

And as God heard their hearts cry out to Him, He brought them *SALVATION* by the hand of a Judge that He raised up.

And tragically, after the Judge died, the cyclical pattern started all over!

We are told in Judges 2:11-19, **“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. And when the LORD raised up**

judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.”

A very sad story of sin, servitude, supplication, salvation and then back to sin as they turn from God!

In this verse here in Hebrews 11:32 we see that Paul starts out with Gideon who is found by the Angel of the Lord, or an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ, down in the winepress trying to thresh wheat.

That does not work, you need to be on the hilltop where there is wind and the wind will blow the chaff and the grain will fall to the ground. There is no wind in the winepress!

Then why was Gideon down there?

Because he was afraid of the Midianites and thus, he was hiding from them. He did not want them to steal his grain or kill him after they stole it!

And we are told in Judges 6:12, **“And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, ‘The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!’”**

I don’t know about you, but to me it sounds like he is shaking in his sandals and not a mighty man of valor!

Why did the Lord say that? Because He saw what his faith would become, not what it was at that point. God was going to grow his faith.

After God calls Gideon, he destroys the worship area for Baal, which his father was part of, his father set it up, and the men of the city would come and worship this false god.

And this mighty man of faith does this at night, I guess he didn't want to be seen.

Not much faith, but enough for this task. And when the people of the city see what took place, they confronted his father regarding what Gideon did, and in Judges 6:31-32 we are told, **“But Joash said to all who stood against him, ‘Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he is a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!’ Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, ‘Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar.’”**

His father caught the faith of Gideon! Faith will spread like that.

Then as the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people from the east gathered to fight against them, the Spirit of God came upon Gideon to lead the people into battle and he was able to gather 32,000 men!

But as he is gathering this army, he has to lay out two different fleeces to make sure this was of God, even though God spoke to Him, he had an encounter with the living God!

Folks, I know that people today lay out fleeces to see if this thing is from God or not, and it is not wrong, but I never see it mentioned anywhere in the New Testament. Why?

Because we have the Holy Spirit in us, guiding us, we don't need to lay out a fleece.

In fact, for me personally, when I was a young Christian, I asked the Lord to give me a sign if I should teach a Bible study, something obvious.

And one night, driving home from work at midnight in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago, I saw this beautiful light show that I knew God had placed there for me, the Northern Lights.

I had never seen them before, and I have not seen them since that time. And I knew at that moment that I was to teach this study. I have never laid out another fleece since that time as I have grown in the Lord. I have learned to let God's Spirit guide me and I think that is the best way to go, to listen to His voice speaking to your heart according to His Word!

Well, back to Gideon, he has 32,000 men to fight against an army of 135,000! Not too good odds and yet for God, too many!

So God brings Gideon's army down to 300 men and their weapons of war were pitchers and torches to start with. Now why did God do that to Gideon? Because, for Gideon and his men, they were going to learn to trust in the power of God and not in themselves or their own strength, which was not too strong! It was a walk of faith!

And it would be out of this victory that God would get the glory and not their military might!

And God did give them a great victory over the enemy. The faith of Gideon God will still use today!

Keep in mind that this list of men of faith are not in order, but Paul speaks of Barak next. And when you think of Barak, I don't think you would consider him a man of faith, but God does!

In fact, we see that a woman named Deborah lead the people, which tells me that no man would rise up for that position.

In this portion of Scripture, in Judges chapters 4 & 5, God is going to give them victory over the Canaanite King named Jabin, whose commander, Sisera was a powerful military leader. They had 900 chariots, which would be like our modern-day tanks.

Deborah tells Barak to go and fight against the enemy and God will give him the victory and he says in Judges chapter 4 that he won't go unless Deborah goes with him!

Now I don't know about you, but when I read that I think, "*What a pantywaist!*"

And yet, he is listed here as a man of faith? All I can say is that yes, Deborah was a godly woman and yes, Barak did go out and fight against the enemy with his little faith and God did give them the victory.

I guess that does encourage me. God looks at our faith separate from our fears!

And then there is this man named Samson. He too was a Judge in Israel and a man of great potential and yet, he lived his life in the flesh, pursuing ungodly sexual relationships.

In Judges chapters 13-16 you can read of Samson and his sorted life. And it wasn't until the Philistines took him captive and they put out his eyes, they bound him with fetters, and they made him move the millstone around to thresh the wheat like an animal, that he returned to the Lord.

We are told that the hair of his head was cut off, which was symbolic of his relationship with God.

And the idea here is that sin will blind you, it will bind you and it will grind at your life as it did with Samson.

And during that time, it says that his hair grew back, which tells me that Samson got right with God as he was a slave day in and day out, going around and around that millstone!

One day the Philistines gathered in their temple to worship their god, Dagon, and they brought this mighty man of God in, Samson, to mock him and the God he served.

And in Judges 16:28-30 we are told, **“Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, ‘O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!’ And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left. Then Samson said, ‘Let me die with the Philistines!’ And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.”**

Samson never lived up to his full potential because he allowed sin to hold him back, to control his life instead of God.

And yet, here at the end of his life we see the faith of Samson as he died in faith! Tragically, it was in his death that he killed more Philistines than in his life because he did not walk by faith!

Jephthah was another judge, whose father got involved with a harlot who conceived and bore Jephthah.

Now, as his brothers grew up, they despised him and kicked him out of the house, out of the family because he was born of a harlot. Not only did they throw him out of the house but the leaders in Gilead threw him out of the city!

As he flees, he goes to Tob and bands together with a group of outlaws. Not a good start for this mighty man of faith!

Over time the people of Ammon made war with Israel and the elders of Gilead, hearing of the strength of Jephthah, called for him to lead them into battle.

My first response would be to sit on a hill and watch them destroyed by the enemy, but not this man.

He agrees to help them out in this matter.

At first, he tries a diplomatic solution as we are told in Judges 11:24, **“Will you not possess whatever Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever the LORD our God takes possession of before us, we will possess.”**

But it was rejected, and he must prepare for war now!

But before he goes into battle, he makes a foolish vow before the Lord, he says, **“Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced toward the people of Ammon. And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, ‘If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD’s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering.’”** Judges 11:29-31.

Now the first person or thing out of his house is his daughter and many feel that he sacrificed his daughter, which is a foolish thing to do.

But I don’t think he did that. In fact, the word **“and”** in verse 31 is WAW in the Hebrew and it can be translated **“or.”**

Thus, it would read, **“whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me . . . shall surely be the LORD’s, [or] I will offer it up as a burnt offering.”**

It seems to me that Jephthah is saying that if a person comes out, they are to be dedicated to the Lord to serve Him. If an animal comes out, it would be offered as a burnt offering to the Lord.

You see, if he were going to offer his daughter up as a burnt offering, he would have to go to Shiloh and have a priest do it.

First of all, if the people got wind of it, they most likely would have stopped him, but even if they didn't, I can't believe that a priest would sacrifice this young woman.

Now, as he sees his daughter come out, he recognizes what this would cost him, for his daughter was now going to spend the rest of her life in service to the Lord. She would not marry, nor have children, which was a great sacrifice, not only depriving her of children, but also Jephthah of having grandchildren.

And if she were going to be killed, why would she bewail her virginity instead of her death?

You see, she was willing to serve the Lord day and night, a life of sacrifice to Him.

And in verses 39-40 of Judges chapter 11 we read that, “**. . . he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man. And it became a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament [or celebrate] the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.**”

You see, it never says that he killed her and if he did the daughters of Israel would not “**celebrate**” this time but would lament. But they celebrated the dedication and faithfulness of this woman as she sacrifices everything to serve the Lord. That is what this word, “**lament**” means in Hebrew, to honor, to praise, to celebrate to commemorate.

God never asked him to do that! Don't do something foolish like Jephthah did. And folks, even people of faith can make mistakes, and God honored Jephthah for his faith not for his vow.

Then we come to David, and David was the King of Israel and yet he failed in his walk with God. He sinned with Bathsheba, he killed her husband Uriah, one of his mighty men, and yet, God still saw him as a man of faith!

You can read of David's life from shepherd boy to King in I and II Samuel and you will see that his faith was not perfect, but God said of him, "**. . . He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'**" Acts 13:22.

Samuel was another Judge, the last Judge in Israel before Saul, the first King in Israel.

And Samuel did not fight against a physical enemy but a spiritual enemy that was destroying his people – idolatry and immorality! He stood up by faith and proclaimed the truths of God even when they didn't want to hear it!

Faith in action for Samuel, not perfect faith but active faith!

Samuel was leading the people, but he couldn't lead his family and his sons were wicked, they did not have the faith of Samuel.

And, as I have said, Paul would love to speak of other men and women of faith, but he says, and this is from The Living Bible, "**Well, how much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith . . .**" Hebrews 11:32.

As we read on Paul is going to speak of what men and women of faith have done, more of a general idea and he does not list specific people of faith, just what happened as these people walked by faith, what they were able to accomplish.

VERSES 33-35a

Paul is saying that the power to accomplish these things was from God and they received that power by faith in Him as Hebrews 11:6 says, **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”**

Thus, they subdued kingdoms as seen in the life of Joshua, King David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah and others.

They worked righteousness through their ministry like Elijah and Elisha, the prophets of God.

They obtained promises like Caleb, Gideon, Barak and others.

They stopped the mouths of lions, like Daniel, David, and Samson.

They quenched the violence of fire, like Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego.

They escaped the edge of the sword, like David from Goliath and King Saul.

Some, out of weakness they were made strong, like Gideon.

Others became valiant in battle like David and Asa.

Some received their dead back to life, like the widow who lived in Zarephath whose son died.

God used the faith of these people to show Himself strong and to bring about a victory and He continues to do that today!

VERSES 35b-38

Now we have no problem with faith, for the most part, until we read these verses and then it is a struggle. Please understand that we are to live by faith in God even when it costs us something.

Deliverance may not come in this lifetime but that should not stop us from walking by faith as we have seen in the lives of these saints who were tortured, beaten.

How did they endure?

Because they looked to a **“better resurrection.”**

Jesus said in John 5:28-29, **“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”**

This life is short when you compare it with eternity, some 90 years compared to a never-ending life with Jesus!

Now, here in verse 35, when Paul speaks of them being **“tortured”** it is the Greek word TUMPANIZO, (toom-pan-id'-zo) and it means to ***“beat a drum.”***

What took place when they tortured people like this is that they would be stretched upon a wheel-shaped frame and then beaten with clubs or leather whips.

And notice that it says that they could be delivered, but **“not accepting deliverance”** they endured this torture!

In other words, they could have rejected their faith, they could have rejected the Messiah, Jesus Christ but they refused to.

How could they do that?

Because **“they might obtain a better resurrection.”**

They did not focus on the temporal but on the eternal, and thus, they walked by faith no matter what that walked cost them.

It is easy to walk in the victory but what about the persecution, the torture?

Guess what, there is still the victory, even in the persecution!

You see, they refused to renounce Christ and were willing to die because they knew they would experience eternal life in their resurrected bodies. That is ***FAITH!***

Others endured trials of mocking for their faith. Others were placed in chains, they were imprisoned. Some were stoned. Others sawn in two. They were poor, wore humble clothing not royal clothes.

And as the world was not friendly to them, the world is not friendly to us! They wandered as we do, because this is not our home, we are citizens of heaven and we look to the heavenly reward, not the temporary rewards of this world!

What impact did these men and women have on those around them?

Morris tells us, ***“The despised and ill-treated group of servants of God was of greater real worth than all the rest of humanity put together.”***

Folks, they still are a witness to us of what true, Biblical faith is all about and may we influence others, encourage others by our faith!

That is what Paul was doing with these Jewish believers, trying to encourage them that no matter what they were going through, they needed to keep their eyes on Jesus and trust in His Word! May we do no less.

VERSES 39-40

Listen again to verse 39 where Paul wrote, “**And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise.**” Hebrews 11:39.

What promise did they not receive?

It was the promise of the Messiah and they did not receive that promise yet because Jesus had not come yet!

What I want you to notice in this is that they were steadfast, they were immovable in their faith in the Lord and His promise that He was coming, the Messiah was coming!

And now, for these New Testament believers, the faith of these Old Testament saints is a witness to them, an encouragement to them to continue on in the faith, not to give up!

And Paul throws in this powerful point showing us the difference between the New Testament saints and the Old Testament saints.

In Hebrews 11:40 he wrote, “**God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.**”

What do we have that is better than what these Old Testament saints had?

Very simply, the completed work of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. We have ***JESUS!***

The promise has come and thus, we have much more reason to hold onto the faith.

Yes, we have these witnesses who have shown us what true faith is about, but we also have something that they did not have and that is the completed work of Jesus on the cross of Calvary for us. He paid in full the penalty for our sins!

And thus, what we see here in these two verses is this distinction between these two groups of people.

They were looking towards the Messiah from the other side of the cross, they did not receive the promise of the completed work of the Messiah on their behalf.

We, on the other hand, look back at the finished work that Jesus did for us on the cross of Calvary and thus we can enjoy the fruits of His finished work because the work is “**perfect**” or completed for us!

Their faith looked forward to the promise, our faith looks back to the historical fact that Jesus completed the work and thus, the promise was fulfilled!

It is all about Jesus and His finished work and there is no salvation apart from that fact.

May we be people of faith in which God can work through to bring about great victories in our lives, in our families, in our communities, in our state, in this nation and in this world.

Remember our definition of faith, and this is from Hebrews 11:1-3 and it is out of The Amplified Bible. It reads, “**NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses]. For by [faith - trust and holy fervor born of faith] the men of old had divine testimony borne to them and obtained a good report. By faith we understand that the worlds [during the successive ages] were framed (fashioned, put in order, and equipped for their intended purpose) by the word of God, so that what we see was not made out of things which are visible.**”

I know, when you look at all that is happening in this nation and this world, you may wonder how God can use a person like you, a person like me, to make a difference!

Look at these men and women of faith, nobodies in the world’s eyes, and yet, God saw their faith and they stepped out and changed a world, and so can we!

If you doubt that, if you are discouraged, if you find that hard to believe, let me leave you with these words from Paul found in Ephesians 3:20-21 that should encourage us all.

He said, **“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”**

Let us walk by faith and not by sight!